

Mothers

Judges 5: 1-9; John 19: 25, 26, 27; 2 John

N. Anderson.

Mothers hearts are needed today as much as ever. It was in the time of disorder and disarray that Deborah came to the fore. In her song she recalls the palmier days, when leaders led (as it should read) in Israel, and the people offered themselves willingly — happy days of the testimony of God! but now what a change! (verse 6), lawlessness was rampant: to walk abroad was dangerous — "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Leaders had ceased (verse 7). Idolatry was practised. In our day we are exhorted — "Little children keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5: 21). What is an idol? Anything that takes the place of God in our affections!

Conflict proved their weakness (verse 8) "Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? Their defences were down; they were weaponless! "Then sang Deborah . . . I arose a mother in Israel" (verse 7). Such as needed today; mothers with a heart for the testimony of God; mothers who bless the Lord; mothers who feel with God.

What a place the mother has in the home. How much she has to do with the children. The father, normally, spends less time with them than the mother who, normally and Scripturally, is the worker at home. How responsible and yet how privileged she is to have such close links with the family in their tender and formative years. What an opportunity for godly mothers to lay a good, Scriptural, and christian foundation in her children.

Our holy and ever gracious Lord, when suspended upon the cruel cross, demonstrated the perfection of His humanity, as beholding His mother standing by in the company of that disciple whom He loved, He put the stamp of His approval upon the blessedness of the natural relationship, saying, "Woman, behold thy son! then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." Blessed consideration of our Lord! Oh! you younger believers with believing mothers, cherish them, hearken to their admonishment, for they know what is best for you.

"Hear, my son, the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the teaching of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck" (Proverbs 1: 8, 9).

This leads us to the consideration of the 2nd Epistle of John, which is probably the last household word in the Scriptures. How decorous the approach of John in this letter to a mother, perhaps a widowed mother, for it is evident she was in charge of the house (v. 10), "The elder unto the elect (chosen) lady and her children" — they walked in the truth. What an emphasis is laid on Truth here!

"The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119: 130). How much such a mother needed divine help in leading her children aright. So John wished for her; first, "grace" — that sense of the favour of God which had opened out the grand revelation of the present era, "Jesus Christ come in flesh," and, "The doctrine of the Christ" — that is Himself come down and Himself gone up, and the unfolding of the truth of the Father and the Son — surely, Eternal Life!

There is no reason at all why sisters should not be in the light and gain of the deep things of God — else how shall they teach their children the Truth? Following grace comes — "mercy" (v. 3). In the busy round of life with its daily family cares and the family household chores, she needs "Mercy" —

that blessed quality of care and consideration which comes down to her in all the intricacies and pressures of the daily family life, to strengthen and bear her up and to arm her for the way. Then John wishes "Peace." Oh! the tranquillity and serenity of the mother who knows and enjoys the "favour" of God and is helped by the "mercy" of God, and — please note — "from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" — all that He is as Lord and Head. This the beloved John desired for her and with it the consciousness of all the charm and sweetness embodied in the precious name of Jesus and, over all, the blessed atmosphere of the Divine Family — "the Son of the Father, in truth and love," the bond of all.

Such then is the requested supply for a true "Mother of Israel" in our day with its erosion of family life and the encroachment, increasingly, of state care attended as it is with the appalling increase of juvenile delinquency; the tragedy of "latch key" children; and the sweeping tide of vandalism and violence.

Here, then, is the bulwark to hold back these features from incursion to the Christian home: Grace, Mercy, Peace, Truth with Love, in an increasingly loveless world.

May every mother, aye, and father too, "Love one another. And this is love, that we walk after His commandments." May we remember ever that obedience to the truth is the proof of love in truth.

Lord, I am satisfied tonight to be
A mother, in a world gone mad with hate;
Here in this hour of earth's agony,
I do not ask that I might do some great
Magnificent achievement, bringing fame;
I do not covet larger fields to roam;
I only want to keep alight the flame
Of God's love, shining from a christian home.
I thank Thee for the children, if the way
Should lead to heartbreak grant me courage, Lord.
I will remember that there was a day
Thy mother's heart was pierced, too, by the sword;
Thy grace will be sufficient now — as then.
I am glad to be a mother, Lord — Amen.

(Composer unknown)